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13 August 1974

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Romania: What Next?

SUMMARY

The Romanian party is preparing to launch an initiative that will be a major attempt to further Bucharest's pretensions to equality and sovereignty within the Soviet orbit in particular and the world arena in general. We expect the party's new programme -- which will probably be published late this month -- to be the most forthright and thoroughly reasoned rejection of Soviet supremacy ever made by an ostensible supporter of the USSR. The programme will also reaffirm and update Romania's so-called "declaration of independence" of April 1964. Its publication and the surrounding events are sure to provoke Moscow and to increase the risk that Ceausescu will miscalculate the limits of Soviet tolerance.

BACKGROUND

The 1964 declaration was preceded by a period of Soviet-Romanian dueling that in many ways resembles the current state of relations between Moscow and Bucharest. Then, as now, the Romanians were:

- Resisting Soviet efforts to isolate the Chinese;
- Opposing Moscow's attempts to integrate the Eastern European economies with that of the USSR;
- Seeking to weaken Bucharest's commitment to the Warsaw Pact;

State Department review completed

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-- Banning the dissemination of Communist periodicals containing propaganda contrary to Romanian policies, particularly material attacking Peking.

For their part, the Soviets were demonstrating an increased interest in the Romanian political scene, including:

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- Alleged efforts to pressure Romania indirectly through neighboring Hungary, including staged scattered demonstrations and work stoppages by ethnic Hungarians living in northern Transylvania;
- Pressure on Bucharest from bloc diplomats who circulated both "disinformation" and veiled warnings.

Although current Soviet-Romanian relations are correct on the surface, several signs point to differences and suspicions. These include:

- Ceausescu's adamant opposition to economic integration within CEMA;
- Ceausescu's determined resistance to reported renewed Soviet efforts to gain some control over elements of the Romanian armed forces, including his opposition to Moscow's reported request for a line of communication corridor through the Dobrudja to Bulgaria.
- Bucharest's continued courtship of the Chinese, most recently evidenced by Foreign Minister Macovescu's visit earlier this month to Peking to underscore Romania's independent stance; Radio Moscow promptly blasted the speech made by the Chinese Foreign Minister at a dinner for Macovescu.

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THE DEVELOPING SITUATION

It is against this background that the latest military and political developments must be read.

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In addition, the Romanians have evidently heightened Soviet concern about political developments in the country by drafting such a reportedly provocative new party programme, which is slated to be adopted at the 11th party congress in November. The document is the first of its kind in Romania; it has not yet been published, but has been approved by the Central Committee. It is likely to prove the most important statement issued by the Romanian party since its "declaration of independence" in 1964.

The Romanians are fostering the impression that the document will reiterate, sharpen, and update the major points contained in the "declaration of independence." Ceausescu has publicly characterized the programme as having "exceptional theoretical and practical significance." In addition, party cadres chief Pana has privately told the US ambassador that the document will contain "surprises" which may not be well received in some quarters. He was presumably referring primarily to Moscow, which was the major target of the 1964 declaration.

Some of the "surprises" are sure to center on real and imaginary Soviet abuses of the Romanian party from the Comintern period to the present, but we expect paramount attention to focus

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on Ceausescu's so-called "Ten Solemn Principles Governing the Conduct of International Relations." These principles stress the equality, independence, and territorial integrity of all states as a cornerstone for the future, and Ceausescu has pressed for their inclusion in every agreement or communique Romania has signed with a foreign country since the early 1970s.

The principles will surely be enshrined in an updated version of the party declaration, carefully cast in pristine Leninist formulations that will be extremely difficult to assail either in doctrine or in logic. The net effect will be a renewed challenge to Moscow's efforts to assert political, economic, and military control over the communist world.

ADVANCE WORK IN BUCHAREST

Within this context, the remarks of Ceausescu and Pana indicate that the Romanians expect the release of their party programme to upset their allies and to lead to intense pressure on Bucharest. In an effort to minimize the effects, the Romanians appear to be orchestrating a campaign intended to suggest that they are already under considerable pressures for pursuing their independent line and to try to head off further harsh reactions.

First, the Romanians have apparently instructed their military attaches to spread an exaggerated sense of alarm.

- Romanian attaches have been deliberately circulating a variety of stories alleging Soviet pressure to gain either an "extra-territorial corridor" or unlimited transit rights across Romania to Bulgaria. The circumstances suggest that Bucharest is as much interested in focusing international attention on its claimed problems with Moscow as on any genuine demands.
- Although the Western press speculated that Soviet sabotage caused the recent spate of industrial accidents in Romania, Bucharest did nothing to counter the stories until Pravda denounced them in a long and authoritative article. This adds to the impression that Moscow is, in fact, putting the squeeze on Bucharest.

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The other half of Bucharest's apparent campaign centers on coming events:

- A UN-sponsored conference on world population is slated to be held in Bucharest August 19-30. This conference, the first ever staged in East Europe by the UN, will be attended by hundreds of delegates -- especially from the West and the Third World -- and by hordes of newsmen.
- The UN conference will overlap with large-scale celebrations of the 30th anniversary of Romania's liberation from the Nazis on August 23.

Ceausescu probably sees the disparate nature of these events -- the UN conference will have an internationalist tone while the "liberation" festivities will be nationalistic -- as working to his advantage. It is probable that the Romanian party will publish its programme during the anniversary celebrations, when Bucharest will coincidentally be host to the assemblage of news teams and delegates at the UN conference. Bucharest could easily calculate that this cast of potentially friendly witnesses would inhibit any harsh and precipitate reaction to the programme from its Warsaw Pact allies.

THE OUTLOOK

Every such initiative raises questions of how far Ceausescu means to push the Soviets and whether he will miscalculate Moscow's response. The Romanian leader is not incapable of trimming his sails as he did, for example, after the invasion of Czechoslovakia or following his trip to Peking in June 1971. Although

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Bucharest also often seems to take satisfaction in flaunting nationalism for nationalism's sake, the language of the 1964 declaration and the expected phrasing of the party programme appear designed to preserve the regime's ability to maneuver. In this and past instances, however, Bucharest gives the impression that it is trying to calibrate its actions to within a notch of what it considers Moscow's peak tolerance.

Ceausescu could, of course, underestimate Soviet wrath, and simultaneously count too much on the restraining effect of moral support for Romania on the part of countries outside the Warsaw Pact. So far, however, Ceausescu has been brilliant in estimating the limits of the tolerable and in occupying all the ground available within those limits. The odds are that he will continue to play the Soviets correctly.

Ceausescu apparently reasons that with the Soviets it is better to accept risk than to show a spirit of compromise prematurely. The latter course, in his eyes, almost certainly would carry with it the prospects of increased demands from Moscow and his other Pact allies as well as the likelihood of increased problems at home.

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Remarks:

Here is a first crack at the memorandum to USIB that the DCI asked for. Please let me have comments by COB Thursday, 22 August.

Richard Lehman
D/OCT

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